

**DDS South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2015**

Members Present: Chair Steve Harney, Carol Cooney, Jean Brookman, David Cassano, Britney Gudeahn, Lauralyn Lewis, Diane Martin, and Thomas Dailey, DDS South Regional Director

Guest Present: Denise Tift and Margaret Mummert

Scribe: Jolie Crescimano-Goss, Executive Secretary, DDS South

Call to Order: Chair Harney called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.

Citizen Comment: Ms. Mummert commented that she would not have known about the RAC had it not been through networking with other parents. All agreed on the need to increase families' awareness of the RAC and general attendance at meetings.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September 16, 2015, meeting were reviewed. *Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2015, meeting based on the change requested during the meeting.*

2016 Council Priority - Enhance Communications among Stakeholders

- Efforts to enhance communications among stakeholders include:
 - Advertising the RAC in the DDS Recreational Newsletter
 - The development of a RAC informational flyer
 - RD's office will disseminate the RAC informational flyer and the 2016 schedule of meetings to case managers for distribution to families
 - RD's office will forward the RAC informational flyer to the DDS webmaster for posting to the DDS website.
 - RAC members will share the flyer
 - Outreach to fellow RACs - Chair Harney reported that he has not received a response to his attempts to connect with the North and West RACs. Regional Director Dailey said he would follow-up with the other two Regional Directors for suggestions on connecting with their members. The Regional Director in the West Region would be happy to speak with Chair Harney in the interim.

Chairperson's Report

- **Creative Housing Workgroup Update:**
 - Discussion ensued on one Council members attempt to develop a shared living arrangement for her son through her involvement with the Creative Housing Workgroup. Members agreed that developing a documentary on the process to share with other families and stakeholders would be beneficial. It was noted that another match is on the horizon.

- The Workgroup continues to explore housing opportunities. Chair Harney discussed Operation Community Home. Founded in 1995, Operation Community Home builds homes for veterans free and clear. The group partners with national builders who build the homes for a cost effective price. Collaborating with philanthropic organizations is something the workgroup may explore further. Establishing a relationship with an “ambassador” of the cause could really help to energize such an undertaking.
- The Workgroup continues to explore the development of a roommate-matching platform.
- The Creative Housing Workgroup continues to meet on the second Thursday of the month from 6-8p.m., at the Acton Library in Old Saybrook. Meetings are open to the public.
- **Field Activity Report:**
 - Member Lewis reported on the activities of the Family First Caucus. Comprised of about 300 families, leadership members of this caucus are in Hartford just about weekly connecting with legislators. Their advocacy has led to several legislator– requested forums. One such forum is scheduled for tomorrow evening from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Milford City Hall (flyer distributed). A DDS family will speak and DDS staff will be on hand.
 - Member Brookman announced the ARC of CT’s free workshop series entitled, After the Cap and Gown. See their website for the schedule of upcoming workshops across the state.

Administrative Updates

- Regional Director Dailey provided updates on, and responded to questions about, the following topics:
 - DSS Community First Choice Program
 - DDS Budget
 - Federal DOL joint employer issue re: direct hires
 - Family Grants
 - Helpline stats
 - Hiring Freeze/vacancies
 - Grad/Age-out/E stats
 - Residential, Day, Behavioral Services Program (BSP) & Autism wait lists
 - DDS SPED guidelines
 - Privatization/Closure/Consolidation of certain publicly operated residential settings
 - Family access to PRAT documents
 - BSP Team Project

New Business

- **2016 Schedule of Meetings:** The 2016 schedule of meetings was approved as presented.

Next Meeting Date: January 20, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Acton Library Old Saybrook, 2nd. Fl. Conf. Rm.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jolie Crescimano-Goss

Jolie Crescimano-Goss, DDS South Executive Secretary